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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/057,313	04/08/1998	JOHN D. MCCOWN	033449-002	6282

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EXAMINER

MCALLISTER, STEVEN B

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

DATE MAILED: 11/16/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/057,313

Applicant(s)

MCCOWN ET AL.

Examiner

Steven B. McAllister

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 August 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 16-19, 21-23, 25-28, 32-35, 37-40, 42-44, 46-48 and 50-66 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 16-19, 21-23, 25-28, 32-35, 37-40, 42-44, 46-48 and 50-66 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 55, 59 and 63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The claims recite having deck of sufficient strength to support at least 1750 psf, but it is not clear whether this is intended to be a stress a localized point, or a load of that amount distributed over some area. It is also unclear over what area this load would be applied (applied to 1 square foot or applied over the entire deck?).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

1. Claims 16-19, 27, 28, 33, 37-40 and 42-44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art method shown in Freeman in view of the Kalmar website (Kalmar) and Backteman et al.

Freeman in its discussion of the prior art (generally col. 1, lines 20-38) discloses selecting a plurality of containers comprising the strapped pallets (col. 1, lines 28-30); providing a vehicle (col. 1, line 28); individual lifting of containers comprising strapped

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pallets (col. 1, lines 28-30), transporting them with a vehicle onto a ship, positioning them and stacking them there (col. 1, lines 28-30). This operation discloses positioning on the deck or another container of sugar. Freeman also shows using a ramp to move a forklift to and from a ship. It inherently discloses that the deck is strong enough to support the vehicle since the method would not be functional otherwise. Freeman does not show using a container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume and having freight loaded therein; loading freight in the inner volume of the containers; that the vehicle includes a gripper including a spreader, the gripper capable of being raised and lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body of the vehicle; securing the container to the deck; or that the wheels of the vehicle are in contact with the support surface during lifting and positioning. Kalmar shows providing containers adapted to contain freight in a marine environment having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume (see e.g., p. 5); and that the vehicle includes a body and gripper, the gripper portion including a spreader attachment, said gripper capable of being raised, lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body (see e.g., p.8 and all photos generally). Kalmar further shows that the wheels of the vehicle are in contact with the support surface during lifting and positioning (see photos of Kalmar). Kalmar inherently shows loading the container since discusses loaded containers and the step of loading the container must inherently be performed (p. 11, line 2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Freeman as taught by Kalmar in order to protect the product shipped from moisture. Backteman et al show securing the containers to the deck via twistlocks (col. 1, lines 39-40; abstract, Fig. 1). It would have

been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the method of Freeman by securing the containers as taught by Backteman et al in order to prevent the stacks of containers from tipping over.

As to claim 17, it is noted that Backteman et al show securing the containers to the deck by semiautomatic twistlocks.

As to claims 18 and 19, it is noted that Backteman et al discloses containers C capable of allowing interconnection of containers by semi-automatic (Fig. 2) twistlocks in a stacked environment. Both Backteman et al (Fig. 1) and Freeman (pg. 1, col. 1, line 29) disclose stacking containers.

As to claim 33, it is inherent that the container is at least partially entered by a workman or vehicle in order to load since the workman or vehicle must handle the load.

As to claim 37, raising, lowering, rotating and inclining the gripping portion for each container is inherent in the reach stacker of Charles.

As to claims 38 and 39, each container has a pair of receptacles for spreader attachment adjacent the top edge of the container (Fig.1).

As to claim 40, Freeman in view of Backteman et al and Charles show all elements of the claim except securing the ramp with a longitudinal rail using a downwardly extending lip. However, it is old and well known in the art to secure a ramp to a longitudinal rail using a downwardly extending lip (such as hooking the lip of a ramp over a longitudinal rail on the back of a moving truck). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the method of Freeman by securing the

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depending lip of the ramp with a longitudinal rail in order to keep the ramp from slipping and increase safety.

As to claim 42, Kalmar further shows that lifting and positioning include moving the gripping portion relative to the body portion of the vehicle and that the lifting and positioning steps are carried out without the use of outriggers (see photos of Kalmar).

As to claim 43, it is noted that Kalmar shows that positioning and lifting includes extending a boom of the vehicle (see photos).

As to claim 44, Kalmar shows that the vehicle does not include outrigger supports.

2. Claims 22, 23 and 46-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art method shown in Freeman in view of the Kalmar website (Kalmar).

Freeman in its discussion of the prior art (generally col. 1, lines 20-38) discloses selecting a plurality of containers comprising the strapped pallets (col. 1, lines 28-30); providing a vehicle (col. 1, line 28); individual lifting of containers (col. 1, lines 28-30), transporting them with a vehicle from the ship to a warehouse on the dock, positioning them and placing them there (col. 1, lines 30-32). Freeman also shows using a ramp to move a forklift to and from a ship. It inherently discloses that the deck is strong enough to support the vehicle since the method would not be functional otherwise. Freeman does not show using a container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume and having freight loaded therein; that the vehicle includes a gripper including a spreader, the gripper capable of being raised and lowered, rotated and inclined relative

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to the body of the vehicle; or that the wheels of the vehicle are in contact with the support surface during lifting and positioning. Kalmar shows providing containers adapted to contain freight in a marine environment having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume (see e.g., p. 5); and that the vehicle includes a body and gripper, the gripper portion including a spreader attachment, said gripper capable of being raised, lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body (see e.g., p.8 and all photos generally). Kalmar further shows that the wheels of the vehicle are in contact with the support surface during lifting and positioning (see photos of Kalmar). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Freeman as taught by Kalmar in order to protect the product shipped from moisture.

As to claim 23, Freeman in view of Kalmar show all elements of the claim except securing the ramp to a longitudinal rail. However, it is old and well known in the art to secure a ramp to a longitudinal rail (such as hooking the lip of a ramp over a longitudinal rail on the back of a moving truck). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the method of Freeman by securing the ramp with a longitudinal rail in order to keep the ramp from slipping and increase safety.

As to claim 46, Kalmar further shows that lifting and positioning include moving the gripping portion relative to the body portion of the vehicle and that the lifting and positioning steps are carried out without the use of outriggers (see photos of Kalmar).

As to claim 47, it is noted that Kalmar shows that positioning and lifting includes extending a boom of the vehicle (see photos).

As to claim 48, it is noted that Kalmar show that the vehicle does not include outrigger supports.

3. Claims 21, 25, 26, 32, 34, and 50-53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art method shown in Freeman in view of the Kalmar website (Kalmar).

As to the base claim 25, Freeman in its discussion of the prior art (generally col. 1, lines 20-38) discloses selecting a plurality of containers comprising the strapped pallets (col. 1, lines 28-30); providing a vehicle (col. 1, line 28) including wheels which are configured to roll on a support surface; repeated lifting of containers comprising strapped pallets (col. 1, lines 28-30), transporting them with a vehicle onto a ship, positioning them and stacking them there (col. 1, lines 28-30). This operation discloses positioning on the deck or another container of sugar. Freeman also shows using a ramp to move a forklift to and from a ship (see Fig. 3). Freeman does not show using a container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume and having freight loaded therein or that the vehicle includes a gripper including a spreader, the gripper capable of being raised and lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body of the vehicle, or that the wheels of the vehicle are in contact with the support surface during lifting and positioning steps. Kalmar shows providing containers adapted to contain freight in a marine environment having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume (see e.g., p. 5); and that the vehicle includes a body and gripper, the gripper portion including a spreader attachment, said gripper capable of being raised, lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body (see e.g., p.8 and all photos generally), and that the wheels are in

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contact with the support surface during lifting and positioning steps. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Freeman as taught by Kalmar in order to protect the product shipped from moisture.

As to claim 21, Freeman also shows unloading the containers at a destination (col. 1, lines 31-33).

As to claim 26, it is noted that in the method of Freeman in view of Kalmar, it is inherent that the vehicle release the container since the containers must be released to be stacked as shown.

As to claim 32, it is noted that Kalmar shows each container having a bottom, roof, and a plurality of side walls.

As to claim 34, it is noted that Freeman in view of Kalmar shows a reach stacker.

As to claim 50, it is noted that Kalmar shows that the lifting and positioning steps include moving the gripping portion relative to the body portion without the use of any outriggers (see photos).

As to claim 51, it is noted that Kalmar shows extending the boom during positioning and lifting.

As to claim 52, it is noted that the vehicle of Kalmar does not include outrigger supports.

As to claim 53, it is noted that Kalmar shows stacking at least three containers high (e.g., p. 9).

4. Claims 35 and 54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Freeman in view of Kalmar as applied to claim 25 above, and further in view of Backteman et al (3,691,595).

As to claim 35, it is noted that Freeman in view of Kalmar discloses towing the marine vessel since it discloses a barge and barges are towed. It does not disclose securing containers to a support surface. Backteman et al show securing the containers to the support surface via twist-locks. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the method of Freeman by securing the containers in order to prevent the stacks of containers from toppling over.

As to claim 54, Freeman in view of Kalmar and Backteman et al show all elements of the claim except a pointed bow on the ship. However, it is notoriously old and well known in the art to make a marine vessel with a pointed bow. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the method of Freeman by using such a vessel in order to more easily cut through the water.

Regarding claims 55-66, it is noted that the claims do not point out any further limitation on the method, but rather provide apparatus limitations. The apparatus limitations are not further limiting on the claim. However, in order to further prosecution, the limitations have treated as is they were further limiting.

Claims 55-66 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anttila et al (4,400,130) in view of Terho et al (3,794,196).

As to claims 55, 59, and 63, Anttila et al show selecting a plurality of containers comprising ISO spec containers; loading freight into the containers; providing a vehicle with a body portion and a gripping portion comprising at least a grabbling member capable of being raised and lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body portion; individually lifting and transporting by means of the vehicle to a storage deck of a marine vessel having sufficient strength to support the vehicle and the container; position each container at desired locations; and securing the container to the deck; lifting and removing the containers to the dock individually and placing them at a desired location. Anttila et al do not explicitly show using a ramp to bring the containers aboard and take them ashore or that the storage deck has strength to support 750 psf. Terho et al show using a ramp comprising a tail gate (col. 1, line 28). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Anttila et al by using a ramp as taught by Terho et al in order to facilitate loading where there is a discontinuity between the quay and the ship. As to the strength of the deck, it is notoriously old and well known in the art to make a deck of sufficient strength to support 750 psf. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to do so in order to maximize the payload which can be carried on the deck and therefore increase revenue.

As to claims 56, 60, and 64, Anttila et al show selecting a plurality of containers comprising ISO spec containers; loading freight into the containers; providing a vehicle with a body portion and a gripping portion comprising at least a grabbling member capable of being raised and lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body portion; individually lifting and transporting by means of the vehicle to a storage deck of a

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marine vessel having sufficient strength to support the vehicle and the container;
position each container at desired locations; and securing the container to the deck;
lifting and removing the containers to the dock individually and placing them at a desired location. Anttila et al do not explicitly show using a ramp to bring the containers aboard and take them ashore or that the beam of the ship is at least $\frac{1}{4}$ the length. Terho et al show using a ramp comprising a tail gate (col. 1, line 28). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Anttila et al by using a ramp as taught by Terho et al in order to facilitate loading where there is a discontinuity between the quay and the ship. As to the beam to length ratio, it is notoriously old and well known in the art to build a ship with a beam at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the length. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to do so in order to promote lateral stability.

As to claims 58, 62, and 66, Anttila et al show selecting a plurality of containers comprising ISO spec containers; loading freight into the containers; providing a vehicle with a body portion and a gripping portion comprising at least a grabbling member capable of being raised and lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body portion; individually lifting and transporting by means of the vehicle to a storage deck of a marine vessel having sufficient strength to support the vehicle and the container; position each container at desired locations; and securing the container to the deck; lifting and removing the containers to the dock individually and placing them at a desired location. Anttila et al do not explicitly show using a ramp to bring the containers aboard and take them ashore or that the ship is a barge with a pointed bow. Terho et al show using a ramp comprising a tail gate (col. 1, line 28). It would have been obvious to one

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of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Anttila et al by using a ramp as taught by Terho et al in order to facilitate loading where there is a discontinuity between the quay and the ship. As to the type of vessel, it is notoriously old and well known in the art to ship cargo via barge with a pointed bow. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to do so in order to more easily go through the water.

As to claims 57, 61, and 65, Anttila et al show selecting a plurality of containers comprising ISO spec containers; loading freight into the containers; providing a vehicle with a body portion and a gripping portion comprising at least a grabbling member capable of being raised and lowered, rotated and inclined relative to the body portion; individually lifting and transporting by means of the vehicle to a storage deck of a marine vessel having sufficient strength to support the vehicle and the container; position each container at desired locations; and securing the container to the deck; lifting and removing the containers to the dock individually and placing them at a desired location. Anttila et al do not explicitly show using a ramp to bring the containers aboard and take them ashore or that the ramp has a length of at least 75 feet. Terho et al show using a ramp comprising a tail gate (col. 1, line 28). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Anttila et al by using a ramp as taught by Terho et al in order to facilitate loading where there is a discontinuity between the quay and the ship. As to the length of the ramp, it is notoriously old and well known in the art to build a ramp of at least 75 feet in length. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to do so in order to cross whatever open water is necessary and to minimize the angle.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 8/6/2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. .

Regarding Applicant's argument as to the inoperability of the combination, it is noted that the test for obviousness is not whether the features of one reference may be bodily incorporated into the other reference to produce the claimed subject matter, but what the references would have suggested to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Beckum*, 169 USPQ 47; *In re Sneed*, 218 USPQ 385; and *In re Keller*, 208 USPQ 871. "...the proper inquiry should not be limited to the specific structure shown by the references, but should be into the concepts fairly contained therein, and the overriding question to be determined is whether those concepts would suggest to one skilled in the art the modification called for by the claims." See *In re Bascom*, 43 CCPA 837, 230 F.2d 612, 109 USPQ 98, 100.

Further, regarding the size of the containers, Kalmar is not used to teach a particular size of container. Rather, it merely teaches an enclosed container suitable for a marine environment.

Regarding the motivation, the examiner believes that he has provided a valid motivation that is well known in the art.

Regarding the affidavit, the examiner believes the claimed method to be essentially a variation of the "roll on roll off" method which is old and well known. While ro-ro processes often move trailers to and from the ships, the process can employ

transport vehicles to move standard ISO containers (e.g., Terhoe et al and Anttila et al). The claimed invention uses a different type of well known vehicle to perform the ro-ro process (and the reach stacker is claimed only in the dependent claims).

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Steven B. McAllister whose telephone number is (703) 308-7052. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 8-6:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert P. Olszewski can be reached on (703) 308-5183. The fax phone

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number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Steven B. McAllister

STEVE B. MCALLISTER
PRIMARY EXAMINER